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REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT

TO THE FINAL SESSION OF THE C.I.A.'S EIGHTH TRAINING ORIENTATION COURSE FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AUDITORIUM
WASHINGTON, D. C.
NOVEMBER 21, 1952
12.27 p.m., e.s.t.

Thank you very much. I am appreciative of the privilege that General Smith has offered me, to come over here and make a few remarks to this organization. I am, naturally, very much interested in it.

When I became President -- if you don't mind me reminiscing a little bit -- there was no concentration of information for the benefit of the President. Each department and each organization had its own information service, and that information service was walled off from every other service in such a manner that whenever it was necessary for the President to have information, he had to send to two or three departments to get it, and then he would have to have somebody do a little digging to get it.

The affairs of the Presidential Office, so far as information was concerned, were in such shape that it was necessary for me, when I took over the Office, to read a stack of documents that high, and it took me three months to get caught up.

Only two people around the White House really knew what was going on in the military affairs department, and they were Admiral Leahy and Admiral Brown. I would talk to them every morning and try to get all the information I could. And finally one morning I had a conversation with Admiral Leahy, and suggested to him that there should be a Central Intelligence Agency, for the benefit of the whole government as well as for the benefit of the President, so he could be informed.

And the Admiral and I proceeded to try to work out a program. It has worked very successfully. We have an intelligence information service now that I think is not inferior to any in the world.

We have the Central Intelligence Agency, and all the intelligence information agencies in all the rest of the departments of the government, coordinated by that Central Intelligence Agency. This agency puts the information of vital importance to the President in his hands. He has to know what is going on everywhere at home and abroad, so that he can intelligently make the decisions that are necessary to keep the government running.

I don't think anyone realizes the immensity of the problems that face a President of the United States.

It was my privilege a few days ago to brief the General who is going to take over the Office on the 20th day of January, and he was rather appalled at all that the President needs to know in order to reach decisions -- even domestic decisions.

He must know exactly what is implied by what he does. The President makes a decision every day that can affect anywhere from 100 million to a billion and a half people. It is a tremendous responsibility.

And I don't think many of you realize the position in which this great country is, in this day and age.

We are at the top, and the leader of the free world -- something that we did not anticipate, something that we did not want, but something that has been forced on us. It is a responsibility which we should have assumed in 1920. We did not assume it then. We have to assume it now, because it has again been thrust on us.

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It is our duty, under Heaven, to continue that leadership in the manner that will prevent a third world war -- which would mean the end of civilization. The weapons of destruction have become so powerful and so terrible that we can't even think of another all-out war. It would then bring into the war not only the fighting men -- the people who are trained as fighters -- but the whole civilian population of every country involved would be more thoroughly exposed to death and destruction than would the men at the front.

That is what we have to think about carefully. You are the organization, you are the intelligence arm that keeps the Executive informed so he can make decisions that always will be in the public interest for his own country, hoping always that it will save the free world from involvement with the totalitarian countries in an all-out war -- a terrible thing to contemplate.

Those of you who are deep in the Central Intelligence Agency know what goes on around the world -- know what is necessary for the President to know every morning. I am briefed every day on all the world, on everything that takes place from one end of the world to the other, all the way around -- by both the poles and the other way. It is necessary that you make that contribution for the welfare and benefit of your government.

I came over here to tell you how appreciative I am of the service which I received as the Chief Executive of the greatest Nation in the history of the world. You may not know it, but the Presidential Office is the most powerful Office that has ever existed in the history of this great world of ours. Genghis Khan, Augustus Caesar, great Napoleon Bonaparte, or Louis Fourteenth -- or any other of the great leaders and executives of the world -- can't even compare with what the President of the United States himself is responsible for, when he makes a decision. It is an Office that is without parallel in the history of the world.

That is the principal reason why I am so anxious that it be a continuing proposition, and that the successor to me, and the successor to him, can carry on as if no election had ever taken place.

That is the prospect that we are faced with now. I am giving this President -- this new President -- more information than any other President ever had when he went into Office.

You gentlemen -- and ladies -- are contributing to that ability of mine to be able to do that. I am extremely thankful to you. I think it is good that some of you have found out just exactly what a tremendous organization Intelligence has to be in this day and age. You can't run the government without it.

Keep up the good work. And when my successor takes over, I want you to give him just the same loyal service that you have given me, and then the country will go forward as it should.

Thank you very much.

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